

**GOOD NEWS THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE
AND SEMINARY**

**A SHORT HISTORY OF
AFRICAN FAITH TABERNACLE CHURCH
AT ANYINAM, AKIM ABUAKWA**

A TERM PAPER

**IN FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENT OF HS 303
CHURCH HISTORY**

**PRESENTED TO
MR. JOHN FUMEY**

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JULY, 2001

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to acknowledge Mr. John Fumey, the history lecturer for his constant support and encouragement.

A big God blessing to Mrs. Esther Annor Tawiah, Rev. Frank Botchway who are my guidance on my English grammar.

Another thanks goes to the Senior Pastor Raphael Ennin of Christ Faith Tabernacle, Russia, Prophet Emmanuel Kweku Botwe, his son who is the secretary, Akotsi branch (A.F.T. church) and a Headmaster of A.M.E. Zion J.S.S. at Kasoa, Senior Prophet John Kofi Larbie of Awutu Assembly, Prophet M.N. Okyere, Leader of United Faith Tabernacle, and all who in various ways helped me to come out with this material.

My wife, Mary Quayeba need to be mentioned, who apart from my being in school for a whole lot of days, did not mind, but encouraged me to use the few holidays I had to stay with her to do this research by traveling up and down.

Finally, I thank my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in whom I live, move and have my being.

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CONSTITUTION

ANNEX I

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INTRODUCTION

Aside the Musama Disco Christo Church which I belong to, the next church my heart goes for to write about is the African Faith Tabernacle Church. It is dear to my heart because as a typical Ghanaian, I always have a love for any group that uses native drums and other native instruments and traditional song to worship God.

I have come to love the church so much because of the way they sing and dance during their worships, which is so special from any other African Independent church in Ghana.

This history of the African Faith Tabernacle Church has become necessary because the church cannot be static, there must be a reform if the need arises. As such, the past, present and the future events of the church's activities must be written down to serve as a guide for the church as long as it exists.

"People who do not know where they came from do not really know where they are going". It is because of this that, history is important for all people, to give them an idea of where they belong.

As a Supervising Pastor of the Musama Disco Christo Church, and a third and final year Student of Good New Theological College and Seminary, I deemed it necessary and most privileged to write about this church in order that it is also

known and be accessible to all those who may want to read and have anything doing with that church.

SHORT LIFE HISTORY OF THE FOUNDER

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Prophet James Kwame Nkansah, well known as Odiifo Nkansah, was born in the year 1862 at Anyinam, Akim Abuakwa by the late Opanyin John Kwa Nkansah and Madam Sarah Akosua Ofosua. Both happened to be of Aduana family of Dampon in Asante Akim and Obo-Kwahu respectively, and they were both domiciled at Anyinam as a result of inter-marriage.

Odiifo Kwame Nkansah from the early stages of his life showed signs of having been inspired by the Holy Spiritual powers of Christian Worship. At the age of twelve (12) he found that his parents were pagans who worshipped idols and fetishes. He was therefore said to have questioned such heathen rituals performed by his parents as sprinkling of mashed yam mixed with red oil and eggs for the dead, and pouring of libation for fetishes.

One funny story he created was that, he secretly watched how mice ate a very sumptuous "fufu" that had been placed in a sacred room for the dead by his family elders, at Obo-kwahu. He craftily deceived his parents into believing that he had seen the dead enjoying the ancestral meal, and invited the elders to watch the proceeding and the mysterious scene. With much reluctance coupled with awe and fear the elders were made to enter the sacred place only to find out

that it was mice, which were making noise whilst doing justice to the meals and nothing else. This obviously disproved any belief in the practices.

He passed away on Wednesday, 23rd September, 1987 at the age of one hundred and twenty-five.

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HIS EDUCATION

It is remarkable to observe that the late prophet in his early life did not get the opportunity to have any formal education. His father was very opposed to sending his children to school in those days with the simple reason that formal schooling was not of any meaning.

However, young Kwame Nkansah on his own made efforts to learn how to read and write under the teaching of a local letter writer of the town, who had interest in young Kwame, and with the help of the Holy Spirit who gave him the enablement.

Indeed, it is of particular significance to mention that when he could read and write, he became for sometime the acknowledged "letter writer" in his hometown, Anyinam. As such people from the surrounding towns and villages approached him for preparation of agreements and other legal documents which were normally prepared by the letter writers of the day.

HIS EARLY LIFE

Young Kwame Nkansah showed much interest in the worship of the Christian God from the early stage of his life, as he decided to attend church services to listen to the preachings from the Bible. In all his efforts, James Kwame Nkansah never let down his spiritual desire towards the worship of God. With this he started with the local A.M.E. Zion mission, which he helped to establish at Anyinam.

However, not having any emotional feeling in the church's worship, he abandoned his membership with that church. He then joined the Roman Catholic Church in which he did a lot of mission work with some of the Bishops and fathers of the church. As he was not satisfied with certain doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, particularly on the celibacy of the priesthood, he could not continue his membership in that church.

In all these days James Kwame Nkansah worked as a clerk in the colonial District Office at Kibi and Mpraeso and served the District Commissioner (as it was then known) who appreciated his stirring qualities of honesty, sincerity, and pure Christian life. He traveled to Ada Foa where he met one Pastor S.K. Blakpe of a Church known as Faith Tabernacle Congregation, which he joined, and was baptized.

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HIS CALL

During my research, I was told by Prophet Emmanuel Kweku Botwe, the founder and leader of the Akotis branch of the African Faith Tabernacle Church, that, according to the prophet, one morning when he was going out to attend to his official duties he saw an Angel of God who made him fall into some spiritual trance. He was then taken into the high heavens to find the abode of God. He thereby was instructed to return to earth to preach the word of God and to heal the sick.

When he returned, he abandoned his job as a clerk, and took to preaching the word of God and went all over Ghana. He traveled far and wide mainly on foot as he evangelized to many villages and towns in Akim Abuakwa, Kwahu, Ashanti, Eweland and the Fantiland.

FORMATION OF HIS CHURCH

During his evangelization work, he came to Ada Foa, where he met one Pastor S.K. Blakpe of a church known as Faith Tabernacle congregation whose head office was in Philadelphia, U.S.A. He was baptized by this Pastor into the church in 1910. He returned and established a branch at Anyinam with his family members and other local people, in 1919.

He continued with the evangelical work to many parts of Ghana, preaching the gospel, praying and healing a number of sick persons. James Kwame Nkansah gradually took over leadership in all the church's activities. No sooner had the central administration of the church in Ghana collapsed than Mr. Kwame Nkansah assumed full control of the entire establishment, and added the word "African" to the name, making it the African Faith Tabernacle Church in 1925.

He therefore adopted the title of "Odiifo" (which literally means prophet) and his name became Odiifo Kwame Nkansah, until his death.

Soon after adding "African" to the original name, the Prophet under spiritual guidance, the church at Anyinam was modified in several ways particularly in its form of worship. He realized that the Bible places more emphasis on the use of traditional drumming and local implements for worshipping God (Psalm 150).

The Odiifo thus employed the use of traditional drums, such as, Fontomfrom, Impintin, Nnawuta, Dondo, etc., to worship the Christian God in accordance and the teachings of the Bible (Psalm 150:3-6). My informant said by employing the use of traditional drums in worship, it has broken the 'myth' which was surrounding the western oriented Christian churches as regards to worship, and has made the worship of Ghanaian Christian churches more relevant and so lively to the taste of an ordinary Ghanaian.

The church has been registered by the Ghana Government with the Registration Number X0129 (Incorporated with Divine Healing) "Abibifo" Gyidi Ahyiase Ntamandan Asore". Its headquarters is at New Bethlehem Camp at Anyinam, with the Postal number Box 50 Anyinam-Akim Abuakwa and telephone number 25.

TEACHINGS AND PRACTICES

The Bible

The Church teaches that the Bible and all its teachings are teachings from God, the Holy Trinity. God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The church teaches that God is the Supreme Being who created the heavens and the earth, who desires righteousness from all who worship him. (Genesis 1:1)

Jesus Christ

The church believes and teaches that Jesus is the Son of God sent to the world to atone for the sins of mankind, in order that mankind should be saved through him. (Matt. 16:16).

Divine birth of Christ

The Church teaches that the Holy Spirit with the power of the most high overshadows the Virgin Mary and she brought forth Jesus (Luke 1:35; John 1:14; Mt. 1:18-24).

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Death and Resurrection

The church believes that salvation is obtained through the faith in death and the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. (John 3:16)

Sickness

With regard to sickness the church believes that God does not bring any sickness on the human being, but sickness that affects man is the result of his conduct or misconduct (Exodus 15:26)

Divine Healing

In addition, the church teaches God's divine healing and that healing is a blessing from God to those who became repentant of their sins (Matt. 10:8; 15:28).

The church practices Divine Healing by praying for the sick person and laying on of hand by the prophets and pastors. The church's main element in healing is sand and oil (lafinta), though they sometimes use water.

As an African Ghanaian, the church believes that most of the sicknesses are caused by the devil (satan) and as a result healing has been the church's most important message. The prophets and pastors thus use healing as a means to convince the people about how satan has been overcome and that God's power is above all powers. These healing gifts of the leaders have made people to believe in the prophets (leaders)

The church lays more emphasis on the healing and the miracle aspects of the Bible, on how God save Daniel from the lions den, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego from the blazing furnace (Daniel 3). Also Naaman was healed by the instruction given, by Elisha through his messenger just to mention a few.

Marriage

The church teaches that marriage is a divine institution designed to form a permanent union between man and woman that they might be helpful to one another (Genesis 2:18) and therefore must be holy. The church does not believe in celibacy of the clergy.

Even though the church believes in monogamous marriage and discourages polygamous marriages, anybody who joins the church with more than one spouse is admitted into it. In the case of people who have more than a wife, when there comes a time of divorce, no additional wife as replacement is permitted. If the divorce is such that it reduces the wives to one, neither would the person be permitted to divorce the remaining nor be permitted to add more.

Sin and Repentance, Confession and Forgiveness

Furthermore, the church teaches on sin and repentance, confession and forgiveness of sins. The church teaches sin as a rebellion against God, and the consequence affects one's soul, spirit and body. The teachings are directed to make one aware, so that one does not commit sin. To sin against God is more serious than a criminal offence. Whereas a criminal offence is what the secular law prohibits (which in itself is sin), sins embraced criminal offences as well as spiritual offences. The church teaches forgiveness of ones neighbour, because the grace of God makes it possible for us to forgive others.

The original sin committed by Adam and Eve made everybody on earth a sinner, that is why God sent his son Jesus to come and teach forgiveness. Example is the Lord's Prayer, where Jesus teaches that "God forgives us our wrongs as we forgive those who wrong us" (Matthew 6:12).

To add, Jesus told Peter to forgive seventy-seven (77) times (Matt. 18:22), meaning, forgiveness must know no bounds.

Worship

Drumming and singing of hymns and songs are part of the church worship, as well as offerings. The church's practice is against the use of idolatry, occultism, fetishism, Jujusm, Spiritualism, Secret orders and all other sorts of superstition. The church worship is against idolatry in the

sense that, members will be defiled by mediums when they turn to seek out spiritists. God warned his people about the mediums, and said "I am the Lord your God", who all needs must be brought. (Leviticus 19:31; 20:6). Against occultism, because it involves magic or supernatural powers, no member is to be seen sacrificing to idols, practicing divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spirits or consults the dead (Deuteronomy 18:10,11), for it is against the worship of God.

Fetishism

No member should have an object for worship, whereby a spirit is believed to live in it (John 17:14, 15).

Jujuism

The church teaches that the members should not allow to be taken captive through hallow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ (Col. 2:8). Spiritualism – that the members should not abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons (1 Timothy 4:1-3).

The Church teaches its members that they should not seek to understand the secrets of creation or nature, for it is the worship of secret orders.

Baptism

The church according to Senior Prophet John Kofi Larbie, teaches and practices water baptism by immersion of a non-believer into water as a sign of his entrance into the communion of Christ's death and resurrection. In other words, baptism is a token of the regenerated soul's union with Christ. It is an obligation for the church to practice because it is an ordinance instituted by Christ (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16), which the apostles practiced (Acts 2:38) to which the New Testament – Churches submitted to (Romans 6:3-5; Col.2:11,12) and has been practiced as a rite in Christian churches.

Again, the church teaches and observes the Lord's Supper, a meal established by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 11:20). It is called supper because it was instituted at supper time. The Church practices the Lord's Supper as a feast of love, a memorial of faith, and a prophecy of hope. It is also on such times that the believers meditate on a crucified Saviour's love, a living saviour's intercession, for the believer and a coming saviour's glory.

In summary, at the Lord's Supper, it is on such times that the believers look back and remember Calvary. Looked up to bless God and thank Him for His unspeakable gift. The church uses this occasion to look round and thank God for their fellow believers, making sure that they are in right relationship with them. It is also a time to look in and confess their sins to

God because he has promised to cleanse us, and in looking forward to the Lord's return and dedicate themselves to doing His will.

In addition, the church forbids the drinking of alcohol, for by drinking it, it will destroy their image as Christians. Therefore they should lead a decent life to avoid fornication.

Another practice of the church is the wearing of no sandals (shoes) to worship God in their temples. The church explains that it is no respect to wear shoes before God. Since people remove their shoes anytime they come before even earthly kings. The church quotes the Bible passage in Exodus 3:1-5 to support this position.

From Ghanaian traditional point of view, it does not show respect for a chief to have ones sandals on before talking to him. It is also unhygienic to enter the place of worship with sandals, for one may walk over an unhygienic item that will bring some illness and diseases to the members. The church believes that since God is holy anything that is brought before Him must be holy. That is why the church does not permit wearing of sandals into their place of worship.

CHURCH WORSHIP

Apart from the main worship on Sundays and Wednesdays for Bible Teaching, the rest of the days of the week are for healing of the sick and prayers for those who have brought their requests or petitions.

The Church's way of worship differs a little bit from the rest of the African Independent churches. That is, it is only the Prophet or the conductor of the service who says every prayer through out the worship. During the worship service, when the Prophet or the leader is entering the chapel, all members stand up as a sign of respect. He or she will then say the opening prayer to be followed by a song and the beating of the traditional drums for a while. In the process of the singing, the members dance to the tune of the drumming.

The Prophet (leader) stops the singing and the drumming for sometime and starts giving a sermon or preaching. Their main way of preaching is the expositional sermon, where the preacher himself selects a passage in the Bible and lets someone read whilst he, the preacher, explains the contents to the congregation. After the sermon, offerings are given by the congregation. An offering box is placed in the middle of the temple for the offering.

Having finished giving the offering, the prophet, pastor or the leader says the closing prayer and all the congregation come to kneel before him or her. He lays his hands on each of them as blessing. After this he or she brings the proceedings of the service to a close. The main language used during worship is the Akan and any Ghanaian language when the need arises.

The worship is supported by the “Adom” singers who sing the traditional lyrics called “Abibi dwom”. The “Adom” singers are those who express strong emotion with the Akan language in singing to the cultural understanding of its members.

They have the “Akyerema” who beat the drums. The “Akyerema” beat the drums to the tune of their cultural dance, which makes the members have the emotional feeling to worship God.

Whilst the “Adom” singers are singing and the “Akyeremas” are beating the drums they are backed by the “Akofo” group meaning (fighters) who clap and dance to revive the rest of the congregation. The “Akofo” group is the prayer warriors for the church.

CHURCH GOVERNMENT

The Odiifo is the centre of the government for the entire church. The reason being that, in the National Council which he presides do not have power to overrule his decision for whatever reasons. The council therefore seems to come together to listen to him and sort to see how what he says can be implemented. At the station level, the church has some elders known as committees. At every station, the prophet who is the founder of the station is the head and presides over all meetings at any given time. The committee's sole responsibility is to implement what the prophet says. The Secretary is the most effective member

among the committee. He keeps records of those who come to the prophet for healing and assistances.

Aside the prophet, there are junior prophets or pastors who work under the Senior Prophet. These people are known as “Akofo” (fighters).

The National Council constitute of representative from the district councils. The district is made up of about ten to twelve or more stations in an area with the most senior prophet as its district prophet or pastor who presides over all meetings also at any given time. Their duty is to implement the aims and objectives of the church through the founder, the general prophet.

The church elders are chosen by the prophet (founder) of the station. The church does not have a strong code of ethics as regards to life and food. However, the members are taught to lead a total temperance in Christian life, and should be useful citizens to the country. That is, members are to lead an example life by being obedient, truthful and humble. In addition, members must produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit, that is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, as stated in Galatians 5:22,23.

It is to be well noted that after the death of the founder and leader, the late Odiifo, the administration of the church was subjected to review and it is hoped that a lot of changes are going to take place.

Finance

The African Faith Tabernacle church endeavours to follow the example of the early church in matters of finance. The church is therefore supported

by free-will offering and occasional fund raising activities. As a result, an offering box is placed before the pulpit or in the center of the chapel where offerings are being voluntarily put in. Those monies are meant for the development of the church.

The prophets and the pastors are neither paid nor supported by the church rather they support themselves on the free-will offering and donations offered them by their “pray for me” members.

Sometimes, people make pledges to these prophets and pastors after they have brought to them their ailments and when they get healed, they fulfill their pledges by paying in kind or in cash.

It is not Biblical for the church not to support its prophets and pastors. The Bible says in 1Corinthians 9:7, that “who serves as a soldier at his own expense”? and again in the same chapter verse 13, that “those who work in the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar”. So I suggest that the church must see to support their prophets and pastors from whatever the church receives from the members.

Training of Prophets and Pastors

Although it is the Holy Spirit who works out and enables each one to his or her post of duty, the church has bye-laws for the training of her ministers. That is, the Holy Spirit does the work through the Minister, but

as a human being the Minister needs to undergo some training to acquire more knowledge on how to discharge his or her duties.

As such, every new pastor or prophet has to undergo some in-service training at the headquarters of the church at Anyinam, for a period determined by the prophet.

Basically, the period of training of new ministers is ranged from six months to two years. It can be less based on one's ability and knowledge. The churches trainees are allowed to do other jobs outside their ministerial duties provided that it would not disturb their ministerial activities.

Baptism of New Members

A member is baptized from the very day he or she declares his or her faith in Jesus. Whether the person comes from another church and has already been baptized or from the pagan world, he is to be baptized like the practice of the Anabaptist faith.

The membership of the church expands mainly through healings and miracles (Luke 9:2). Before a person comes forward to enroll as a member, he or she should first deny the things of worldly interest promise to take up the cross and follow Jesus. (Matt. 16:24).

Again, the church keeps record of enrollments, particularly the name, residence, nationality, name of Father and Mother, family (if any) or house

number etc. This is done for easy identification of family in case of any casualty. Moreover, new members come to the church through the interest they have in the traditional drumming and songs singing with dancing during worship. The members say that their songs and drumming are so very inspiring and reviving that they motivate the sick and those troubled by evil spirits.

Social Organization

The church under the new leadership of Prophet David Kweku Nkansah, a well-educated person, has been able to lead the church, to establish about eighty (80) primary and junior secondary school. Three senior secondary technical schools at Anyinam, Koforidua and Sefwi Asanwinso. This information was given to me by the Secretary of the church Akotsi branch in the person of Mr. Emmanuel Botwe. He is the head master of A.M.E. Zion Junior Secondary School, Kasoa.

CHURCH AFFILIATION

The African Faith Tabernacle church is not affiliated to any other religious organization. Again, the church shall never take any compromising stand on her doctrines to connect herself with any individual Christian group or groups. That is the church will not agree with any individual Christian group or groups whose doctrines contradicts that of theirs. For the Bible says "if anyone comes to you

and does not bring this teaching, do not take him unto your house or welcome him" (II John 10).

In addition, the church does not associate herself with any religious body or bodies for any public or private function or worship when that body is or bodies are suspected to be false or her doctrine examined by the church to be crooked.

These bodies will be determined by their teachings and practices to be contradicted to that of the church's true doctrines. For the Bible says, "anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work. (II John 11).

The church does not permit any person or persons to work under her auspices when that person or persons is not well acquainted or not recommended by the leader (founder) of the church. It is explained that no body will send somebody to do something in his name without first knowing the faith of that person or his behaviour.

My informant told me that laying on of hands are done only by the prophet and are not done suddenly (1 Timothy 5:22).

He explained that laying on of hands is not done any how. They are done on the inspiration of the Holy Spirit through the prophets or pastors in charge.

Branches

The church is said to have spread from Anyinam to many other towns and villages throughout Ghana. It has even spread as far as Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Nigeria and Britain.

The church spread to these places through the healing ministry. It all came about that citizens from these countries, who had their healing through the late prophet, went back and established the branches. Presently these branches are being headed by Ghanaian Ministers upon the request of native founders.

BREAK AWAY BRANCHES

The church before the death of the founder Odiifo Kwame Nkansah, was one of the fast growing African Independent Churches in Ghana. But after the death of the Odiifo many of its Senior Prophets have defected and formed their own churches. These break aways have weakened the growing pace of the mother church. After the death of the late Odiifo in the later months of 1987, there arose a misunderstanding between the family of the late prophet as to who was to succeed him and head the church. What is sometimes wrong with the African Independent churches is the mode of succession. Most of these churches do not specify about who should lead the church in case the leader dies in their constitutions.

As a result of their failure they leave behind problems and conflicts when it comes to who becomes the successor. When Prophet Nkansah died because he did not make adequate provision for who was to succeed him, the African Faith Tabernacle has suffered break aways; most of its senior prophet has abandoned the church.

There is now conflict between the elderly nephew, prophet Michael Nkansah Okyere, junior nephew prophet Emmanuel Adu Owusu, and their nephew, Prophet David Kweku Nkansah who is a grandson to the late Odiifo. Each is claiming the leadership of the church.

Attempts to resolve the matter through several meetings were not possible, because none of them was prepared to compromise his stand.

The matter was taken to law court and the verdict came in favour of the grandson of the late Odiifo to be the next leader of the church. The elderly nephew, who is also a lawyer by profession was the loser, but was the one to inherit the late prophet on the family side. (that is the physical materials). The reason why prophet Michael N. Okyere was not endorsed as the leader of the church was that he did not show much interest to be a leader when the late Odiifo was alive. The grandson David who was staying with the late Odiifo took all the challenges though he was not on a pay roll or an allowance.

For that reason, during the later years of the late founder, he was sent by him to perform his ministerial duties both in Ghana and outside. Moreover, when the

late prophet James Kwame Nkansah was alive, he had these three important chiefs as his members, Nana Takyi of Mpesedadze near Saltpond, Nana Anyinamhene and Nana Nyaekueku of Agona Nyarkrom who he shared all his discussion with. He told them that his grandson David should be the next leader of the church when he dies, but fails to make any written note to that effect. It was upon the testimony of these chiefs that the court ruled in favour of the grandson, David Kweku Nkansah.

Therefore, Prophet Michael Nkansah Okyere and his supporters defected and named their branches United Faith Tabernacle church. This was disclosed to me by Senior Prophet Emmanuel Kweku Botwe. Prophet Emmanuel Adu Owusu also with his support branches renamed theirs as Christ Faith Tabernacle, while David Nkansah became the leader of the remaining congregation of the African Faith Tabernacle the mother church.

Again, during the time of the late Odiifo, some of his senior prophets wanted to defect and make the branches they were heading to be their own but the prophet was able to persuade them against those decisions. But after the death of the prophet, when the church was divided among the nephews and the grandson, some of the senior pastors thought it wise that this was the right time for them to have their own independent churches and thus brought about the separations.

Another reason, for the break away was that they could not follow a prophet who is a lawyer by profession. Their question was how could he be an effective leader

with such a profession. Knowing the background of the profession, that they are not reliable, they cannot give their full support and faith to him.

Also others said, they could not follow the grandson who they started ministering long before he came to the scene. No reason was given to me when I tried to know from some of the Senior Prophets.

Master Emmanuel Botwe, the Headmaster of A.M.E. Zion JSS, Kasoa, the Secretary to the Akotsi branch told me that the most well known break away prophets who have now become founders and leaders are prophet J.K. Tawiah of Christ's Faith Church, at Narzert-Akroso, Prophet Acquah of the church of Bethsheda at Anyaa, Accra, Prophet Michael Nkansah Okyere, United Faith Tabernacle with the church headquarters at Odorkor-Accra, and Bishop Mensah of Reformed United Faith Tabernacle in Kumasi.

Another is the Christ Faith Tabernacle church at Russia in Accra with prophet Emmanuel Adu Owusu as founder and leader. All these break away churches have some of the branches of the mother church in their favour who have changed their names of African Faith Tabernacle Church and adopted the new names by their respective prophets.

Christ Faith Tabernacle Church

Apostle Emmanuel Adu Owusu, the junior nephew of the late Odiifo Nkansah, was born in the year 1946 at Obo Kwahu in the Eastern Region

of Ghana. His father was Opanin Isaac Kofi Owusu of Nkwatia and his mother was Madam Mercy Ama Dwamena of Obo-Kwahu.

His mother was from the Eduana family, which Apostle Emmanuel Adu Owusu belongs. He belongs to his mother's family because in the culture of the Akans, all the children join their mother's family as the custom demands.

He was educated at Anyinam by his late uncle Odiifo Nkansah, founder of the African Faith Tabernacle church. After his elementary education, he was sent to secondary school at Nkwakwa. He was a good goal keeper during his school days. When he completed his secondary education he left his uncle and came to Accra and worked at Okoamah Leather Factory as a shoemaker for ten years.

His parents were Presbyterian and so he was baptized into the Presbyterian faith. When he was young and was staying with his uncle at Anyinam his uncle prophesied that he would be a great prophet one day but as a young boy from secondary school, he decided to work and earn some money.

His Call

While he was working with Okoamah Leather Factory in Accra. Most of his colleagues came to him for advise whenever they found the going

tough. His advice was always based on the word of God. From there he started proclaiming the gospel and healing all kinds of sickness. He therefore, returned to his uncle at Anyinam. At Anyinam with his uncle Odiifo Kwame Nkansah, Adu Owusu worked as a trainee pastor under his uncle.

The prophecy about him came to pass that God through him did miracles in answering prayers, and healed all kinds of sickness.

He was sent to many parts of Ghana for the proclamation of the gospel. In all these years he was not ordained, until 1970, when he was ordained by the Prophet James Kwame Nkansah in the African Faith Tabernacle Church at Anyinam, and from that day he was given the title "prophet" and his name became Prophet Emmanuel Adu Owusu.

His Vision was to spread the good news to all people and to heal all kinds of diseases through the Holy Spirit.

His wife's name is prophetess Dora Owusu, who is also from Obo-Kwahu. She is helping the husband in doing God's work.

Formation Of The Church

The church was established in 1970 by prophet Emmanuel Adu Owusu in the name of African Faith Tabernacle. The church continued to be a

branch of the mother church until the death of Odiifo Nkansah, the founder of African Faith Tabernacle church.

The matter was taken to court after several attempts to resolve the matter through several meetings, but to no avail, because none of them was prepared to sacrifice his stand. The verdict came in favour of the grandson. The elderly nephew who is the senior brother to Prophet Emmanuel Adu Owusu, Prophet Michael N. Okyere and his supporters defected and name their branches "United Faith Tabernacle Church".

Then prophet Emmanuel Adu Owusu also with his supporting branches broke away and renamed theirs Christ Faith Tabernacle Church in 1990 during the Ghana Government's order to register all churches. The name of the church in Akan means "Christ Mu Gyidi Ahyiae Ntamadan Asore".

Soon after the change of name of the church, the leader also adopted the title "Apostle" instead of the prophet.

Though Christ Faith Tabernacle Church seems to be a new church, it still continues to worship the way the mother church does (refer to No. 5 church worship of African Faith Tabernacle Church).

In matters of administration, Christ Faith has drawn a new constitution as its guide. I therefore attach a copy of their constitution.

Finance

The church endeavours to follow the example of the early church in matter of finance. The church is therefore supported by free will offering, tithes, dues and appeal for funds/harvest and anniversary. As such an offering box is placed before the pulpit or in the center of the chapel where offering and tithes are put in voluntarily (see church constitution article 24 finance).

OBSERVATION

From my observation, I have come to the conclusion that the church is planted on Jesus Christ. The church as the body of Christ started well with love among the members. Formerly there was proper discipline and understanding among the elders and the members and as a result, the church was richly blessed. The church gradually lost such godly love and understanding and the people began to act on their own will and persuing their own interests without heeding to the commands of the Lord in the Bible. This unfortunate attitude started after the death of the founder, Odiifo James Kwame Nkansah.

I think prophetism, vision and dreams are too much emphasized and considered than the scripture. Though the spiritual things are not bad, but they also have to use the word of God. Knowledge and wisdom of God have been given to the church to approach certain situations in the Ministry.

Interpretation of the Bible is also another problem, since the Minister has no theological training. I also noticed that one important thing that the church does not practice is Bible Studies. If members have a lot of teachings from the Bible about the Truth of God, the church would have the opportunity to grow and spread. I believe if the church is able to adopt some of the above discussed observations, there is more hope for her to develop and progress.

An interesting thing that I observed is their Healing Ministry where the church uses sand and ^{olive} oil as the main elements for healing. When I enquired from prophet Michael Nkansah Okyere, the most Senior nephew of the late Odiifo, who is now the leader of the break away United Faith Tabernacle Church, he told me that, God revealed the use of sand for healing to the late Odiifo the founder.

He told me it was during a time that the late founder was attending to a very serious sick person, where his prayer and all methods he knew could have saved the sick person at that time did not proof well that God revealed to him, and told him that sand with oil should remain as the only element in his healing Ministry.

When I wanted to know the theology behind this, he explained that God created man from the dust of the ground (Gen. 2:7) and if man is sick, the person might be loosing some dust or the dust is weaken, that the same dust must be given to the sick person to regain his or her strength. Or that person might be developing

more dust which same dust must be giving to reduce the pressure for the person's restoration.

Again, I observed that all their ministers and even young ones who are found to have some special gifts like prophecy, healing etc., or named after the late Odiifo wear white cassock with red band on the waist and another red band around the shoulder which identify them as African Faith Tabernacle Church ministers. They don't wear sandals, not even outside their temple. Whenever they are in their regalia, but the members wear and remove when entering their temples.

- The theology behind this is that, believers must give reverence to God whenever they come before Him, he explained. They quote the scripture where Moses was told to remove his sandals when he went near the burning bush, because he was before the Lord for the place was Holy ground (Exodus 3:5).

Finally when one listen to their way of singing, one could notice that the church portrays God as all-powerful. Again, the words use in their prayers also confirms God as miraculous and powerful one. And due to the cultural background of the founder and the congregation as Ghanaians, the respect for the family elders among Ghanaian societies has influences their church life style. Their tone of singing, drumming and dancing portrays their cultural identity as Ghanaians.

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CONCLUSION

I commend the late prophet James Kwame Nkansah and his elders who supported him and introduced the use of traditional drums, instrument, and songs in their worship. From the cultural background the using of native drums, instrument and songs has made the church purely Ghanaian and easy to be identified. And anytime a member hears the sounds of the drums the one has the emotional feeling of worshipping God. It also reminds non-members where the churches are that worship time is due, because the drums are beating in the early hours of four and five in the morning.

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INTERVIEWEES

Botwe, Prophet Emmanuel Kweku
Founder of African Faith Tabernacle Church, Akotsi branch.

Botwe, Master, headmaster, A.M.E. Zion
JSS Kasoa, Secretary African Faith Tabernacle Church,
Akotsi Branch.

Ennin, Senior Pastor Raphael, Christ Faith Tabernacle Church, Russia – Accra
General Headquarters.

Larbie, Senior Prophet John Kofi,
African Faith Tabernacle Church,
Awutu Assembly.

Okyere, Prophet Michael Nkansah, Leader,
United Faith Tabernacle Church,
Nungua – Accra.

Regional Officers Meeting at Odorkor,
United Faith Tabernacle Church on Saturday 10th February, 2001
Chaired by Pastor Solomon Kwadu (Regional Pastor)

Christ Faith Tabernacle Church

KRISTO GYIDI AHYIAE NTAMADAN ASORE

Established 1970

Bankers:

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

Regd No.

P. O. Box X 108
James Town
Accra. Ghana
West Africa.

CHRIST FAITH TABERNACLE CHURCH CONSTITUTION.

ARTICLE 1:
NAME & TITLE:

- a) The Church shall be known and called THE CHRIST FAITH TABERNACLE CHURCH.

ARTICLE 2:
AIMS & OBJECTIVE:

- a) To convert sinners to Christ.
- b) To help members to develop their spiritual skills in propagating the word of God.
- c) To educate members to live as true ambassadors of CHRIST and encourage members to participate in civic responsibilities in their Localities and Communities – Rom. 13: 1- 7, Titus 3:1 John 19:11, Proverbs 8:15.

ARTICLE 3:
REGISTRATION:

The church shall endeavour to register with Registrar General's Department or the Deeds Registry to establish its genuiness among the religious community.

ARTICLE 4:
LEADERSHIP:

The Leadership of the CHURCH shall unanimously conferred on Founder and leader in the event of death or when he is unable to attend any official function, the most active, suitable and senior of the church shall act as leader of the church until a new leader is elected.

The election shall be done by Church Council by choosing two candidates from the council Ministers. The election shall be by secret ballot and the candidate who obtains the highest vote shall be the Leader

ARTICLE 5:
HEAD-QUATERS:

The CHURCH shall establish a permanent Head quarters at any convenient site in Accra as may be morally and spiritually decided upon by members and the Founder.

ARTICLE 6:
CHURCH COUNCIL:

The church shall form a council to deliberate on policy matters, initiate planning programmes, evaluate the church's performance from time to time with the view of offering remedial advice where necessary. The membership of the COUNCIL shall be confined to church members of Elders with high religious sensitivity and shall always be chaired by the Founder/Leader. The meeting of the COUNCIL shall be convened quarterly or bi-annually.

ARTICLE 7:
TRUSTEES:

The Trustees of the Church shall consist of the following officers of the church with their respective responsibilities shown against their offices.

LEADER/FOUNDER-

This office shall be the highest in the church, overseeing progressive management of the church, directing its affairs and signing all official documents.

SR. APOSTLE-

The church shall revolve on his shoulders and shall keep an eagle's eye on its operations both internal and external. He shall deputize for the Founder/Leader.

GENERAL SECRETARY-

He shall record all church proceedings and be concerned with the Administration aspects of the church and shall perform other additional duties as may be directed by the council or Founder.

TREASURER-

He/She keep accounts and records of all the church monies and expenditure accounts on its operations.

WELFARE DIRECTOR-

Shall be in charge with the responsibility to assist in the welfare of all members, visitors and the success of the general operations of the church.

DIRECTOR OF WOMEN'S SECTION- Organize the Female members of the church in all activities providing support to the needy ones.

DIRECTOR OF MEN'S SECTION- Organize the Male members of the church providing adequate training and equipping the youth to be matured Christians and useful citizens.

ARTICLE 8:
SEAL:

- a) seal shall be made from any symbol or device resolved by the council.
- b) It shall always be in the custody of the Founder/Leader.

ARTICLE 9:
MEMBERSHIP:

- a) Membership of the church shall be opened to all and sundry- forbidding any artificial boundaries including those persons whose behaviour and characters shall be described and identified as abnormal human being, tribal racial or any kind of discrimination.
- b) Would-be members should confess Jesus Christ as their Lord

- c) Person to be admitted as members shall be obliged to own a membership card to proof their commitment to the church.

ARTICLE 10:
CHURCH GOVERNMENT:

The church's arrangement of personnel in authority administering as spiritual heads shall be as follows: a) APOSTLE, b) PROPHET, c) PASTOR, d) EVANGELIST, e) TEACHER & f) DEACON. This provisional arrangement has been made necessary to enable the Founder/Leader have adequate time for prayer and the word to advance into the spiritual welfare of the church.

ARTICLE 11:
REGIONAL DISTRICT (BRANCHES) a) The church shall open branches at the Regional/District of the nation to promote the aims and objects of the CHURCH.
b) Regional/District and Local Apostles and Pastors would be ordained and appointed to Govern, lead and control such branches.

ARTICLE 12:
ENLISTMENT OF PASTORS/DEACONS/OFFICERS: a) Such shall be people with clear sense matured Christian duties, preference, however, will be given to members with spiritual potentials, who have a Divine call.
b) Such would be examined in the light of 1 Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9.
c) He must possess a moderate education or able to read the Holy Bible.
d) He must be willing to learn and undergo a basic training.

ARTICLE 13:
ORDINATION

- a) certificate of ordination shall be issued to candidates when authorized by the COUNCIL. It shall be issued by the General Secretary and shall bear the signatures of the Founder/Leader and the General Secretary.
- b) Candidates for ordination shall appear before the council to be examined and passed. No worker shall be ordained to the church until He/She has been active in the church for a period of 2-years and acting that position for two (2) years.
- c) All ordination shall be officiated by the Founder/Leader or any minister designated by him.

ARTICLE 14:
EMOLUMENTS OF FOUNDER/LEADER: The CHURCH COUNCIL shall decide the monthly remuneration or allowances for the Founder and other Ministers according to order of merit.

ARTICLE 15:
QUARTERLY MEETINGS AT HEAD QUARTERS: All Pastors at post in the Regions Districts shall mobilize their Elders and Pastors to proceed to quarterly meetings at the Head quarters.

ARTICLE 16:

TERMINATION OF PASTORS' APPOINTMENT: a) Any Minister who constitutes himself in such a position as uncondusive to his continued consider himself personal non grata in the CHURCH. Such shall be dismissed.
b) Any Minister so dismissed or excommunicated shall be banned from any activities of the church, any one who conducts business with him in the name of the church does so at his own risk.

ARTICLE 17:

DURATION OF PASTORS ORIENTATION COURSE: a) Pastors/Ministers enlisted into the church shall under go six months orientation course (transformation training) to acquaint themselves with the operational activities of the church before being posted.

ARTICLE 18:

ORDINATION CEREMONY:

- a) Minister/Pastor during ordination or before enlisted into the church shall be made to study this constitution carefully.
- b) They shall be made to swear to hold allegiance to Jesus Christ and to hold in high esteem the true Doctrines of JESUS CHRIST, and to provide people with valid opportunity to hear the Gospel in their own language.

ARTICLE 19:

RATION OF PASTORS:

- a) In order to build Pastors of the church to be fully matured, Pastors shall exchange platforms or stations from time to time. The COUNCIL shall use their discretion as this issue.
- b) Pastors refusing to go on transfer without reason accepted by the council shall be penalized or dismissed.

ARTICLE 20:

RETIREMENT:

The council in conjunction with the welfare director conductor a farewell service with a deserving award for a pastor retiring due to old age, medical reasons.

ARTICLE 21:

BAPTISM:

Baptism of members whose previous baptism is not by immersion or new converts shall be done by a recognized minister authorized by the Founder or Pastor-in-charge.

ARTICLE 22:

YEARLY CONVENTION OR TABORA FESTIVALS: Such shall be decided yearly by the council and planned by the welfare committee. For the spiritual and mental upliftment of both ministers and members and mostly to winning new souls for CHRIST.

ARTICLE 23:

DAYS OF WORSHIP:

- a) Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays shall be observed as church service days.

ARTICLE 24:
FINANCE:

- a) The church shall be supported through freewill offerings, tithes, dues and appeal for funds/harvest and anniversary.
- b) A Bank Account shall be opened with any Bank in the name of the church.
- c) Signatories to the Bank shall be the Founder/Leader, General Secretary Treasurer. Signatories of any two of the three shall effect the withdrawal of cash and transaction of any business. Controlling of accounts and financial of policies shall be the sole obligations of the COUNCIL.
- d) An imprest shall be kept with the Treasurer for petty expenses and shall be accounted for. Branch churches shall send $\frac{1}{3}$ of total monthly income to Headquarters.

ARTICLE 25:
FUNERAL GRANT:

- a) The church shall pay part of the cost of the coffin for a deceased member and provide a shroud.
- b) A charity fund shall be organized and a voluntary contribution by members for the bereaved family. In case of the death of the Founder and Ministers their children and wives shall be supported as the council may decide.

ARTICLE 26:
REPORTING SYSTEM:

Monthly detailed reports on both personnel, assets and financial accounts of the Local branches, shall be sent to the Head quarters by Pastors-in-charge.

ARTICLE 27:
MARRIAGE:

- a) Polygamy is strictly prohibited no Minister or Member shall marry two wives.
- b) However Polygamists can be admitted into the church but they cannot hold any office in the church.
- c) Adulterers and Fornicators would be excommunicated.
- d) Only marriage agreed by both the families and registered would be blessed and recognized in the church.

ARTICLE 28:
INCENTIVES FOR PASTORS & MEMBERS: To encourage and inspire members for effective service to God and mankind, incentives shall be given to members who excels in various fields of the church annually.

ARTICLE 29:
EDUCATION & PLANNING:

The Church shall set up Educational Institutions such as 1. Bible Schools, Nurseries; First and second cycle Institutions to promote the Intellectual and Spiritual well being of Members and the Society.

ARTICLE 30:
MISCELLANEOUS:

- a) Where convenient and appropriate, the Council shall have the right to take decisions or act in any manner in the interest of the

mission, provided such decisions or actions are not in conflict with the spirit and letter of this Constitution.
b) Such decisions or actions must be reported to the members of the CHURCH at a previously announced general meeting.

**ARTICLE 31:
AMENDMENTS:**

This Constitution may be amended by resolution passed by two-thirds majority of the members present and entitled to vote at a specially convened meeting of the Mission to whom due notice of the proposed amendment shall have been given.

**ARTICLE 32:
COMMITMENTS:**

- a) The Council shall have the right to appoint committees to which may be delegated such duties as the council may deem fit. The Council may authorize such committees to co-operate with persons other than members of the Council.
- b) The General Secretary and Leader shall be ex-officio members to all committees.
- c) The Committees shall be as Follows:
 - i. FINANCE COMMITTEE
 - ii. EDUCATION COMMITTEE
 - iii. WELFARE COMMITTEE
 - iv. DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE
- d) Others may be formed at the discretion of the COUNCIL.

**ARTICLE 33:
GIFTS:**

We believe that the Church which is the Body of Christ should manifest the nine gifts of the Spirit. 1 Cor. 12: 4 – 11, that every believer should bear the nine fold fruits. Gal. 5 : 23.

ORDINANCE:

We believe in the following ordinance partaking of Bread and Wine in memory of our Lord's death, Baptism by immersion, Laying on of hands and anointing of the sick with oil, 1 Cor. 11:23 – 26, Matt. 3: 16 – 17, Acts 8: 36 – 39, Mark 16: 18, James 5: 14 – 16.

**ARTICLE 34:
CHURCH PROPERTY:**

- a) The property of the Church shall belong to the very nucleus who formed the original Church.
- b) Under no circumstance shall any one claim any property from the Church in any form, when one feels to vacate his/her membership or dismissed.
- c) The Church shall be the sole owner of all inventory and any other property of the Church.

**ARTICLE 35:
OFFICIAL UNIFORM:**

The Official Uniform prescribed by the church are: - for the Apostle/Prophet, White Garment with Red and White strip in the middle band around the waist and diagonally over the breast.

ARTICLE 36:

INSTRUMENTS USED FOR WORSHIP: As authorized in Psalm 150, 1-6, The (C.F.T.C) uses all the instruments embodied therein eg. Atumpon (Talking Drums), Foutomfrom, Akasaa, Frikyiwa, Nawuruta, Loudspeakers, Brass Band, Tambourine Drums etc. during worship to glorify the Lord.

ARTICLE 37:

THE EMBLEM OF THE CHURCH: The Official Emblem of the Church is the Christ, Bible and Talking Drums which also serves as the Official seal signifying the genuineness of the (Authority) of correspondence.

ARTICLE 38:

RECOGNITION OF PASTORS/PASTORESS AND EVANGELISTS: All Pastors/Evangelists of the Church shall be recognized by the issuing of Official Certificate of the Church which will enable them to perform their duties as such e.g. Preaching Baptism, etc.

ARTICLE 39:

EXHORTATION TO PASTORS: All Pastors/Evangelists are piously advised to abide by the directives and teachings of the Founder and presiding Elder in all matters relating to Divine Healing concerning the church. Any Pastor/Evangelist contravening this order shall be expelled from the church.

ARTICLE 40:

ORDINATION OF NATIONAL CHAIRMAN AND APPOINTMENT OF REGIONAL DISTRICT CHURCH ELDERS: a) The appointment of National Chairman is officially made on the approval of the National Trustees of the church on behalf of the entire branches of the church. Under no circumstances should outrageous interference reports from irresponsible persons leveled against the Chairman. The appointment shall be by a simple majority vote.

(b) **ORDINATION AND APPOINTMENT OF PASTORS /EVANGELISTS:** Before any person could be ordained as a PASTOR or EVANGELIST of the church, he/she must undergo Spiritual Training for a period not less than two years at the National Head quarters Training Centre at Russia – Accra.

ARTICLE 41:

OFFICIAL RECOGNITION OF THE FOUNDER AND PRESIDING ELDER: APOSTLE EMMANUEL ADU OWUSU is officially recognized as the Apostle/Prophet of the CHRIST FAITH TEBERNACLE CHURCH to whom special respect and honour must be given by all members of the CHURCH (Elder).

- (b) **OFFICIAL AND SPIRITUAL DUTIES OF THE APOSTLE:** To examine patient brought before him, according to ailment and heal them.
- (c) To teach and direct all the Pastors Spiritually in the performance of their duties in Healing, Preaching Administration of the Lord Supper. Settlement of personal and official disrupted among members and their respective Elders.
- (d) **ELECTION AND APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS:** Appointment of officers of the church shall officially be made by the CHURCH COUNCIL through elections by a simple majority vote.

FOUNDER & LEADER: APOSTLE EMMANUEL ADU-OWUSU